



Rural HILIGHTS

Local News from Rural Electric Convenience Cooperative

RECC directors receive certificates

Two RECC directors were recognized for completing training by the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) in September. Andy Goleman of Divernon was presented with a Credentialed Cooperative Director Certificate and Clayton Bloome of Pawnee received a Board Leadership Certificate from RECC Board Chairman Mel Repscher.

NRECA provides training in governance and leadership for co-op board members to help them deal effectively with cooperative business issues. Andy has represented District 7 on the RECC board since 2014, and Clayton was elected to represent District 1 in 2010.



From left, RECC Board Chairman Mel Repscher presented Clayton Bloome with his Board Leadership Certificate and Andy Goleman with his Credentialed Cooperative Director Certificate from NRECA.



VETERANS DAY
Honoring All Who Served
Nov. 11

RECC closed for November holidays

RECC's office will be closed during two holidays in November. Crews will be on standby for any outages or emergencies, and our dispatch service is available round-the-clock at (217) 438-6197.



Thanksgiving
Nov. 24 & 25

This November, let your voice be heard

By Meghaan Evans

Low voter turnout has been a topic of conversation for the last several election cycles. Since the 1960s, voter turnout during presidential elections has seen a steady decline – with the occasional uptick here and there. In the 2016 primary election cycle, voter turnout in most states was only 21 to 30 percent, and this was a record year for primary voter turnout. In Illinois, we saw a voter turnout of 38.9 percent, but that still leaves a large number of citizens that aren't making their voices heard.

Some speculate the reason for the decline is because the average American is not as engaged in politics as they have been in the past. And who can blame us really? Often times, we may feel like candidates are not speaking to the issues we care about. Or perhaps we don't feel like we understand enough about the candidates' stances on the issues, or even the issues themselves. But we can change this.

At RECC, we want to see civic engagement in our rural communities increase. We want to give you what you need to make informed decisions about candidates at all levels of government, not just the presidential race. And we want you to know more about the issues that could impact our local communities.

America's electric cooperatives are doing their part by informing co-op staff and members through Coops Vote, a non-partisan campaign with one simple goal: increase voter turnout at the polls this November. By visiting vote.coop, you can learn about your candidates, access voter registration information and more.



Rural development issues

The **price of energy** is an issue that affects all Americans, and is a key topic of discussion this election season. Whoever wins will ultimately have a major role in developing policies that determine how safe, affordable, reliable and environmentally responsible America's energy production is for years to come. Before heading to the polls this fall, carefully review the energy proposals of each candidate. Consider which plans will ensure continued access to affordable electricity for you and your family.

The future of rural economies depends on their ability to keep up with today's global economy, which is why **access to broadband internet** is a key topic of discussion this election season. Just 55 percent of rural Americans have broadband at home. With the right state and federal policies, broadband technology can become available to all rural Americans, allowing families and businesses to communicate in new and faster ways.

A recent federal government regulation threatens to place burdensome regulations on rural businesses while doing nothing to strengthen protection of our resources. The rule, called "**Waters of the U.S.**," or WOTUS, would expand federal regulation to include ditches and other insignificant bodies of water. This expansion will lead to a red-tape nightmare for families, businesses, and electric cooperatives that own and work on those sites. Fortunately, WOTUS has been temporarily delayed by the courts. It is up to our elected leaders to permanently halt its implementation.

Over the last decade, **cybersecurity** has gone from a far-away threat to a daily occurrence in America. Each year, thousands of hackers test our cyber defenses, as they seek out personal information like social security and bank account numbers. Some of these hackers even look to disrupt the power grid. As rural electric consumers, it is critical we ensure our state and national leaders understand this issue and are work to strengthen our defenses.

Learn and Vote

We encourage everyone to visit vote.coop and take the pledge to learn more about the issues that impact us locally. Let's work together to improve our communities by increasing voter turnout and changing our country, one vote at a time.

Meghaan Evans writes on consumer and cooperative affairs for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association.

Energy efficiency ideas to help reduce your winter heating bill

It's time to get serious about the approaching winter weather. We all have areas that can be improved in our homes to reduce winter heating bills and provide better comfort. Here are some ideas that you can use before frosty temperatures arrive.

1. Keep the cold air out and the warm air in. Caulk and weather-strip around windows and doors to eliminate air leaks. Seal gaps in floors, walls, around pipes and electrical wiring. Close any vent to your basement or crawl space. Make sure your attic insulation covers all of the heated ceiling space, with at least eight inches of insulation depending on the material used.

2. Check or replace your heating system. Change your air filters regularly, and make sure they are facing in the correct position for the airflow. Fix any broken or disconnected ducts, and seal joints and connections with mastic (not duct tape). If your heating system is over 15 years old, consider a replacement with a more efficient model. If you have a propane or gas furnace and an older air conditioner, replace the AC with a heat pump for better efficiency in both winter and summer.

3. Minimize the use of plug-in heaters. No matter what the advertisements say, there is no "miracle" heater. Typically, a portable heater will use 1,5000 watts of power, which could cost 18 cents per hour to run. That doesn't sound so bad, but it could add up to more than \$4/day and over \$120/month if running continuously! Think about ways to keep an area comfortable without adding an extra heat source (see items 1 and 2 above).

4. Make minor lifestyle changes. During the day, let the sunshine in by opening shades and drapes. Close them at night to retain the heat. Turn off lights, electronics and computers when you don't need them. Unplug that extra refrigerator in your garage or basement if it's not stocked with food.

5. Ask us for helpful booklets on energy-efficient construction methods, evaluating appliance energy use, and no-cost energy saving tips. And, sign up for our free SmartHub app to see your daily energy use online!



RECC rebates reminder

RECC offers member rebates for energy-efficient electric heating systems, water heaters and appliances. Rebate application forms are available from our office or at our website (www.recc.coop) under "Download Forms."

Rebate applications should be submitted with a copy of the receipt for the qualifying equipment after the installation is complete. There are two forms to choose from – Electric Heating Systems and Appliances. Guidelines and minimum equipment sizes are listed on the application forms.

Heating Equipment:

Geothermal Systems.....	\$250
Heat Pumps with Electric Backup	\$250
Heat Pumps with Gas Backup	\$100

Water Heaters:

Standard Electric (<10 Yr. Warranty)	\$200
Long-Life Electric (10+ Yr. Warranty)	\$250

Appliances:

Electric Range.....	\$ 25
Electric Clothes Dryer.....	\$ 25

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Board meeting reports.

Your Touchstone Energy® Partner 

Andrew Boston joins RECC

Andrew Boston was hired as a Groundman at Rural Electric on September 10, working with our linemen and tree trimming crew. Andrew graduated from North Mac High School in 2013, worked at Drake-Scruggs in Springfield, and then enrolled in the Electrical Distribution Lineman Program at Lincoln Land Community College. He was a temporary RECC employee during the summer of 2015, mainly working on the tree crew. He is finishing his last class for the Lineman Program this fall, and is expected to become an Apprentice Lineman at RECC next March.



Andrew Boston was congratulated by Lou DeLaby, Manager of Operations and Maintenance, on his full-time employment at Rural Electric.

Ten Memorial Scholarships offered for 2017

\$2,000 awards to be made in four categories

The Thomas H. Moore Illinois Electric Cooperatives (IEC) Memorial Scholarship Program is now open, with ten co-op scholarships for \$2,000 available! RECC member families are eligible for nine of the academic scholarships, with one offered for co-op employee or director families.

The memorial scholarship program began in 1996 with two scholarships for \$1,000, and has increased due to memorial contributions and fund raising efforts by electric cooperatives in the state.

\$2,000 scholarships will be awarded in 2017 in these categories:

- **Five scholarships** – for high school seniors who are the sons or daughters of an Illinois electric cooperative member receiving service from the cooperative.
- **One scholarship** – for a student who is the son or daughter of an Illinois electric cooperative director or/employee. (Earl W. Struck Memorial Scholarship)
- **Three scholarships** – for students enrolling full-time at a two-year Illinois community college who are the sons or daughters of Illinois electric cooperative members, employees or directors.

- **One scholarship** – for a student attending the lineworker's school conducted by the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives in conjunction with Lincoln Land Community College in Springfield. (LaVern and Nola McEntire Lineworker's Scholarship)

"Our goal is to assist electric cooperative youth while honoring past rural electric leaders with these scholarships," says President/CEO David Stuva. "RECC and the other Illinois electric cooperatives are always seeking ways to make a difference in our communities. One of the best ways we can do that is by helping our youth through programs like this one. In addition, we are very pleased to offer the electric lineworker's scholarship. It will benefit not only a young person in rural Illinois but also help assure a trained workforce for the future of our cooperatives."

Scholarship applications are due by December 31, 2016, and winners will be announced in May 2017. Scholarship information has been sent to area high school guidance counselors and is also available for download at the cooperative's website at www.recc.coop. Online applications are preferred.